

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission

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| ITEM | 16 | DECISION |
| TOPIC | Interagency Agreement with Department of Public Health | |

The Natural Resource Commission is hereby requested to authorize the director to enter into an agreement for DNR to provide \$50,000 to the Iowa Department of Public Health. The Parks, Fisheries, and Wildlife Bureaus have programmed \$20,000, \$15,000, and \$15,000, respectively, in their budgets for this agreement. DPH will in turn forward the DNR's contribution to Iowa Council of Governments to coordinate local initiatives.

The Parks, Fisheries, and Wildlife Bureaus are developing an alliance with DPH to coordinate promotion of life style changes that make for healthier Iowans. DPH has for years been advocating healthy eating and exercise habits. Many people are just beginning to realize that enjoying the outdoors and engaging in recreation activities are important parts of the formula for better health. Fresh fish and wild game are known to be important contributors to a healthy diet.

In addition to DPH's statewide work, many local entities have programs directed at healthier lifestyles. The challenge is to get these oftentimes independent programs to better understand and link with one another to achieve increased benefits. To that end, the DNR and DPH are working with Iowa's 17 Council of Governments (COGs) to coordinate local initiatives. The first phase is the COGs designing and hosting 18 conferences across the state for participants to better understand and appreciate the potential mutual benefits of local initiatives. The goal is to transform the enthusiasm created at each conference into productive, action-oriented local alliances. The plan also includes each COG assigning a staff person to spend at least part time nurturing these local alliances to seek future funding to create and implement programs.

DPH via a contract with the COGs is contributing \$60,000 in addition to the DNR's contribution to carry out the conferences and follow-up work. The COGs themselves are each committing \$1,250 for a statewide contribution of \$22,500 to the project. The DPH and COGs are also working on an application for a grant from the Wellmark Foundation to increase the money and resources available to this initiative.

Kevin Szcodronski, State Parks Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division

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